

UNDER ARIZONA SKIES

Property of Mr. Johnnie Speer.

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CAST

FRECKLES COMEDY
STEVE LEAD
MENDOZA MEXICAN HEAVY
SHERIFF HI HAWKINS..... CHARACTER
ELSIE LEAD
PIQUITA MEXICAN HEAVY

ACT ONE

SETTING. The ranch house. House on the L. Rocks and Trees on sides. Arizona landscape in back.

ACT TWO

SETTING. A rambléd down shack out on the plains. Half of the roof caved in and the sky showing through. Cloud effects. Door in the G. Window with panes broken. Rude furniture and rough atmosphere throughout.

ACT THREE

SETTING. The same as Act one.

PROPS

Bench
Rough Table
Marriage License
Gun
Candle

UNDER ARIZONA SKIES

FRECKLES

(ENTERS AT RISE OF CURTAIN) (LOOKS OFF) There is that greaser and Steve Morton's wife out there holding another pow wow. Something darned strange about them two people. (CROSSING DOWN C.) I wonder if they're figurin' on double crossin' Steve? (STARTS, BUT STOPS) Um---if I thought they were---Um!---I reckon that is Steve's business; not mine. How the devil did Steve ever happen to marry a Mex half breed? I don't know. And he's sure a gentleman if he is a cow puncher. I don't know--(SUDDENLY) But there is something I do know: if she was my wife, she'd cut out meeting that greaser or well---there'd be a heap of trouble starting with the accent on the heap. Hmmm! (SMELLS) Beef stew for dinner. If there is onething I like better than that, it's another beef stew. (STEVE MORTON ENTERS) Howdy, Steve!

STEVE

Howdy, Freckles. You're the very man I was going to look up.

FRECKLES

Dinner ready?

STEVE

No, not quite. Are you hungry again?

FRECKLES

Not again---yet!

STEVE

Well, you'll have to wait for your dinner today. The Missus wants you to go over to the station for her---

FRECKLES

Is she expectin' something?

STEVE

Yes--something very important (SMILES) And you'll have to be very careful of it.

FRECKLES

You know me; that is the name of the town I come from---careful! Didn't the missus trust me last week to bring over a five gallon jug of whiskey. And didn't I bring it and never even try to smell the cork?

STEVE That's probably the reason why she is go
That's probably the reason why she is going to trust you again, but this time---it is something more valuable than a jug of whskey.

FRECKLES

More valuable than---why what in the tunder is it?

STEVE

A young lady---the Missu's niece---she's come all the way from Boston to pay us a visit.

FRECKLES

Can't the parson go?

STEVE

No; he has got some work to do.

FRECKLES

Send Higgins.

STEVE

Can't--he is too busy.

FRECKLES

You're the foreman. Don't you think you're the proper one to meet a distinguished visitor?

STEVE

Perhaps--but I'm too busy.

FRECKLES

Hmmm! Durned funny that I'm the only person on the ranch that aint worked to death this morning.

STEVE

What's your objection? You aint afraid of a girl, are you?

FRECKLES

Of course I aint afraid--but--I don't want to deprive any one else of the pleasure.

STEVE

Don't let that worry you. You'd better get a move on you---you can ride slowly, and the train will probably be there ~~by~~ the time you arrive.

FRECKLES

All right. How am I going to know her? What's she look like?

STEVE

I don't know---I never saw her--but you can't miss her as she'll look very different from any of the rest of the women passengers. that get off at the station--and she'll be on the lookout for you too.

FRECKLES

Looking for me?

STEVE

Well, not for you personally, but for some one from the ranch. (BUS.) Run along; be very polite---and be very entertaining--

FRECKLES

Entertaining?

STEVE

Entertain her---talk to her.

FRECKLES

Talk to her sounds all right, but what the hell will I say? (EXITS R. U. E.)

STEVE

(EXITS IN THE HOUSE)

MENDOZA

(AFTER SLIGHT PAUSE ENTERS L. U. E. FOLLOWING PIQUITA)

PIQUITA

Why do you follow me, Mendoza? I tell you it is no use---no more threats---you cannot frighten me; talk is cheap, but I know you---you will never go so far.

MENDOZA

(SWOWLS) For certain---you do not know zatt for love, a man he do many things---you know I love you.

PIQUITA

(SNAPS FINGERS) Love---pah!

MENDOZA

(LOOKS AT HER LOVINGLY) You are still very beautiful.

PIQUITA

Still? You talk as if I was an old woman.

MENDOZA

Nobody knows your age better than me---I have all your life known you. If it is not in years that have changed you (SLOWLY) I know what--- but you are-- different!

PIQUITA

Four years with Steve Morton is enough to change any woman.

MENDOZA

(QUICKLY AND SAVAGELY) He is cruel to you?

PIQUITA

You mean does he beat me? Ha ha you ought to know if a man could beat me--you tried it once. No--he is not cruel to me, he thinks he is kind, but in his heart he does not care for me. He is sorry he ever married me.

MENDOZA

Ah so --zat is it, eh? There is another woman--

PIQUITA

I think so.

MENDOZA

Who is she?

PIQUITA

Who? (LAUGHS) If I only knew that!

MENDOZA

Why care who she is? Leave this gringo---how can you expect of him love? Pah! What do those cold blooded Americanos know of love? It is only us who know how to love. Piquita, amigo come with me---back to Juarez. (QUICKLY TRIES TO EMBRACE HER)

PIQUITA

Careful! Fool! If he should see you--

MENDOZA

(BOASTINGLY) And if he did--what? What could he say to me, eh? Has he not robbed me of you? Let him come---I ask only one thing. I (STEVE ENTERS) I only want to see this Steve Morton face to face.

STEVE

That's easy. What do you want?

MENDOZA

Who are you?

STEVE

The man you just expressed a wish to meet, Steve Morton.

MENDOZA

So---so!

STEVE

What is your business with me?

MENDOZA

(SHRUGS SHOULDERS) ~~Idgd jwhetejajjoleeagddjdagd~~ It is nothing important
---later---perhaps---I see you. (BOWS MOCKINGLY STARTS UP C.)

STEVE

Wait! (TO PIQUITA) Is this man annoying you?

PIQUITA

No, and if he were, what is it you? I can take care of myself.

STEVE

I want to know! It is my duty to protect you from such loafers as he.

MENDOZA

(ANGRILY) Senor, you are---

STEVE

What is your business here? What are you doing on this ranch?
Your place is on the other side of the border.

MENDOZA

(SHRUGS SHOULDERS) I go where I please. And, as to my business, the
senor will pardon me--if I say, that it is none of his business.

STEVE

You think not? Well, we Americans have a habit of making things our
business. Let me give you a warning. I'm the foreman of this ranch
and if I catch you here again and you fail to give a satisfactory
account of yourself--I'll hitch you to the tail of a broncho and
drag you back to your side of the border line.

PIQUITA

Steve Morton, I have known this gentleman all of my life.

STEVE

That is your misfortune.

PIQUITA

He is my friend. To insult my friend is to insult me. I suppose that
is why you do it. You think my friends and I are not worthy to associ-
ate with you.

STEVE

Friends like this fellow certainly are not.

PIQUITA

Then I am not. Oh I have seen for a long time that you are tired of
me. very well, you despise me---I leave you.

STEVE

You seem to forget we are bound together---you and I.

PIQUITA

Si--until death do us part, eh?

STEVE

Yes, that is the oath we took. You and I, and there is no backing out (BUS) You have been hanging around here for two weeks---during that time my wife has crossed the border twice--to attend your infernal orgies and fandangoes--I suppose now that she was in your company.

MENDOZA

(SMILES SNEERINGLY) And if so, surely the senor does not doubt his wife's honor?

STEVE

No, if I did, you would not be here.

MENDOZA

No? Where then, Senor?

STEVE

In your grave! Go make tracks for your own country. It is my warning---if I find you heereabouts after sunrise tomorrow I'll drop you without mercy.

MENDOZA

(ANGRILY) So? (SCORNFULLY) Pah! gringo bluff--you forget two can play the same game. (MOCKINGLY) I accept your warning, Senor. (SLIGHT PAUSE TURNS TO PIQUITA BOWS) I say good bye, Snora---since I have only till sunrise--(LAUGHS MOCKINGLY) I must go--

PIQUITA

It is quite a while till sun rise yet. Shall I walk with you?

MENDOZA

(BOWS) I shall be very happy, Senorita.

PIQUITA

(LAUGHS) Husband dear, I go for a walk with an old friend. (LAUGHS) Try not to be jealous, dear. I will soon come back to you.

MENDOZA

(MOCKINGLY) Adios, senor. (STARTS TO EXIT WITH PIQUITA. STOPS) Senor, I laugh at you. And as for your threats--pah! I no more fear you than the little dog that barks at my heels. (LAUGHS MOCKINGLY)

PIQUITA

(LAUGHS) Adios, dear husband---don't be angry. (LAUGH AND EXIT L. U. E.) (MENDOZA WITH HER)

STEVE

(PAUSE) Four years of wretchedness--for that one moment of madness. Well, I made the mistake, and I must pay--that's all. God, let me close the account as soon as you wish. (EXITS IN HOUSE)

FRECKLES

(ENTERS R. U. E. WITH ELSIE) Here you are--the residences of your aunt, Mrs. Thomas Cannon esquire. Mr. Thomas having departed this sinful life Mrs. Thomas by the law of the country a widow.

ELSIE

(LAUGHS) Yes I know. This is the house, eh?

FRECKLES

Residence--residence.

EKS OEI

ELSIE
I'm glad we got here. May I let go of your arm now?

FRECKLES
Certainly.

ELSIE
Will you tell me why you insist upon taking my arm in broad daylight?

FRECKLES
The explanation is yours; I was told ter be entertaining and I t'ought I'd be also be polite if it killed me.

ELSIE
You were both--very entertaining and polite.

FRECKLES
Thanks. I reckon I know what's what if I am a cow puncher.

ELSIE
I had no idea Arizona was such a pretty place.

FRECKLES
You bet Arizona is something of a raukeadelle.

ELSIE
Eh?

FRECKLES
As we say in Spanish.

ELSIE
Oh you speak Spanish, do you?

FRECKLES
Like a Chinamam. I ought to know a whole lot about Spanish. Yes, I was most brought up on Spanish stew.

ELSIE
I must thank you for all your kindness and---information, Mr.---

FRECKLES
Freckles!

ELSIE
Freckles?

FRECKLES
Yes, Miss; that is what the boys call me.

ELSIE
But that is only a nickname of course. What is your full name?

FRECKLES
Freckles, Miss--just the same, full or sober.

ELSIE
But it is a strange name to call.

FRECKLES
There is a great many strange things out here, Miss. I've been called Freckles ever since I can remember so let it go at that. If you

don't like to call me that--just make a noise like a knife and fork on a dinner plate, and I'll be with you before the echo dies out.

ELSIE

I'll remember.

FRECKLES

Thanks. I'll tell the Missus you are here.

ELSIE

If you please.

FRECKLES

If I please! There is politeness for you, no use talking---eastern folks have got us poor Arizona ginks frozen to the bulkheads when it comes to society stunts as we says in the cabarets in Carson City Miss, I'll see you sooner. Oh I aint so slow myself with the re-part--t-tee--stuff! (EXITS IN HOUSE)

ELSIE

What a good fellow--not a bit like the bowbony I've read about. And he actually seems proud of the name! What a pretty place this is--perhaps out here I can forget--forget, the memory of my lost happiness Do I want to forget? In the bitterness of my sorry, haven't I the sweetness of memory?

STEVE

(ENTERS FROM HOUSE) The Missus will be--(BUS) Elsie---

ELSIE

Steve--Steve Lewis---you here like this? We---we--heard you were dead

STEVE

Steve Lewis is dead, Elsie---died the night you wrote that letter. I am Steve Morton, range rider, and cowboy.

ELSIE

But if your father or brother knew--

STEVE

Steve Morton has no father or brother.

ELSIE

I can't bear it, Steve. It is all my fault, I can't bear it. My life has be one of remorse---unhappiness, all these years, Steve. I have never forgiven myself for that cruel letter.

STEVE

Don't, Elsie, don't--

ELSIE

When I wrote I didn't love you---I---I--

STEVE

You did what was right, Elsie. When you found out that you were mistaken, you only did your duty in telling me so.

ELSIE

But it wasn't true---it wasn't true, Steve.

STEVE

Elsie!

ELSIE

It was Uncle's fault---yes and my own folly. Oh I do not spare myself You had been away so long, they lied to me---they told me--no.' I cannot tell you what they told me, but I should have known you better than to believe them---when I wrote that letter--I said I didn't love you--but it wasn't the truth, Steve--it wasn't truth, I did love you. I do love you---I always will--(SOBS)

STEVE

No! no!

ELSIE

Yes. I am not ashamed to confess it--I don't blame you for hating me.

STEVE

I do not hate you, Elsie.

ELISE

You must. I spoiled your life. I did---I did--Oh, Steve--let me make it up for you. (GOES TO STEVE PUTTING HER ARMS ABOUT HIM)

PIQUITA

(ENTERS AND SEES SCENE) Ah, at last the other woman, eh?

STEVE

My God! How can I tell her? (ALOUD) Elsie, dear one, listen--

PIQUITA

Steve, I am here. It is a great pity to spoil such a pretty picture. What you call it---the old love, eh? You pardon me, senorita, if I take your lover from you. I am not jealous--oh no-- but I must not leave him to the temptations of a devilish pretty girl like you. (LAUGHS)

ELSIE

Steve, who is this woman?

STEVE

She is my --my wife!

ELSEE

You wife?

PIQUITA

(LAUGHS) Si, senorita---hiw wife, until death do us part--eh, Steve?

(C U R T A I N)

A C T T W O

FRECKLES

(AT RISE) Yep--there is the city gal--yep just as natural as life and there is Steve and there is the nine of hearts following. That is love all riht. Yep. I always knowed it was trouble with some gal that sent Steve out here to hide away on the ranch. Now I'm sure of it. Umm---Queen of Spades--that Piquita sure. Umm---nine of spades--who--ten of spades---sufferin' catamounts trouble with the accent on the trauble. That means that the Mex wife is on--and that she's liable to go on the rampage with both feet. (THROWS CARDS DOWN DISGUSTED) Oh thunder! (NOISE OFF STAGE)

VOICE

(OFF STAGE) Stop that ye infernal coyote.

FRECKLES

What's that?

VOICE

Yer goin' to break my leg.

FRECKLES

(LAUGH) It's the Parson. More trouble! Shall I help him? No. The last time I saved him from being dragged into the river by a mad steer he called me paul--pry--always interfering with other people's pleasures.

STEVE

(ENTERS) Somebody's mixed up with the young cattle at the barn. Freckles, better go down and see what the trouble is.

FRECKLES

It is the parson. He was yapping a minute ago.

STEVE

Well, better give him a helping hand.

FRECKLES

All right, Steve, but he is sure to cuss me again for interferring.

STEVE

Never mind, Freckles; better stand a little cussing, than to have him injured.

FRECKLES

All right. It is one of the young heifers--she got the parson down and she's jumping on him.

STEVE

Is he hurt?

FRECKLES

The heiffer, no? He's as lively as a flea.

STEVE

No--the parson.

FRECKLES

That cuss? He never gets hurt. The other day that black and white broncho kicked him in the head.

STEVE

STEVE

No?

FRECKLES

Yes, and it's laid up with a sprained ankle.

STEVE

Give him a hand, Freckles--

FRECKLES

All right. But if he cusses me again, I'll set the whole bunch on him. (EXITS GROWLING)

STEVE

I hate to go away from her---but I must---I must---at once.

PIQUITA

(ENTERS) Ah, you here. I followed you--so I expected to find you here--but I'm surprised that you are--(LAUGHS) alone.

STEVE

What do you mean alone?

PIQUITA

Oh I am no fool you cannot blind my eyes. I know--and I am tired of it all.

STEVE

If you are tired wait a bout me

PIQUITA

So? Well, since you are so very wise, Sator Morton, maybe you can tell me why I am here.

STEVE

You come to meet that Mexican our Mendoza.

PIQUITA

Pah! You know what they say about these friends of yours---these woman? They ask why you are here--you a gentleman, working on a cattle ranch. And they say you have a secret. In the east you are disgraced ---you come here to hide your shame.

STEVE

Leave Miss Randolph's name out of this discussion please.

PIQUITA

Ah you want to protect her, but you are not anxious to protect me the woman who has a right to your protection.

STEVE

Piquita.

PIQUITA

You would like to get rid of me---you would like to throw me aside --me the half breed--so that you could be free to marry this woman.

STEVE

Our marriage was a mistake.

PIQUITA

You think I am not of their class---I disgrace you, eh? All right

I will be what they say I am --I disgrace you more---I am your wife
I stick to you till I drag you down to my level, since I cannot rise
to yours.

STEVE

That you will never do, Piquita.

PIQUITA

(LAUGHS) We shall see! Never! that is a long time. Tonight I shall
begin. Adios, Senor Morton---tonight! (STARTS TO EXIT)

STEVE

People don't take kindly to a marriage to a half breed and yet I've
tried to make her happy. In what way have I failed? I wonder. (EXITS)
If I see that Mexican half breed about this ranch tell him that I w
will drop him on sight.

PIQUITA

(LAUGHS) Unless--perhapsh he drops you first--eh?

STEVE

That is my warning never the less.

PIQUITA

Of course--I must obey my dear husband. (EXITS DOOR C.)

STEVE

People don't take kindly to a marriage to a half breed and yet I've
tried to make her happy. In what way have I failed? I wonder. (EXITS)

FRECKLES

(ENTERS WITH ELSIE) Some climb, eh? Not used to our little hills, eh?

ELSIE

If those are little hills, what do you call mountains out here?

FRECKLES

Mountains the big fellers--(BUS) Big ones, after you get use to the
little ones, I'll show you the others.

ELSIE

Thanks!

FRECKLES

When you get so you can climb to the top of Perkins Nose, that's a
big one, about seventeen thousand feet high that's what it is--
when you can climb up to the top and give three cheers without
losing your breath then---well, then you're a fitter and to be accepted
as a citizen of the ge--lori---ous state of Arizona.

ELSIE

If that test is necessary---I'm afraid I shall never be able to
qualify for citizenship.

FRECKLES

Oh you can't tell---this is a great country--lot of wonderful cures
took place here. Yep, little miserable critter came out here 'bout
two years ago--no lungs--heart weak--no liver--gizzard all gone had
to be carried from the station to the hotel---gamblers were offering
ten to one he wouldn't live till next day. He stayed out here six
months--and where is he now?

ELSIE

Dead?

FRECKLES

Dead nothin'. Last week in New York he won the welter wieght champion ship of the world and now he is--

ELSIE

No-w--no, Frec les, be careful---I suppose he's going in for the heavy weight championship---

FRECKLES

No--no that is not yet, but he's got a challenge out to fight any two middle weight on the same night then---there is another feller---

ELSIE

Please, please! You make me feel so small--so helpless and--you have quite convinced me of the wonderful properties of your country.

FRECKLES

Glad of that. When you go back east, you can help boom the ge--lori--ous state of Arizona.

ELSIE

I certainly will.

FRECKLES

Feel rested now?

ELSIE

But I shudder at the journey back. I always thought that ranches were perfectly level

FRECKLES

No. Nothing so near the Mexican line can be on the level.

ELSIE

What is this place for? No one lives here, do they?

FRECKLES

(THUNDER)

No, this is just a shelter for the boys when the weather is bad. Hell Hear that? Hmmm! Pretty close too.

ELSIE

Think we will have a storm?

FRECKLES

You bet yer, and a cracker jakk, or I'll eat a greaser without washing

ELSIE

Can we get back to the ranch before the rain comes?

FRECKLES

Hmmm! I don't know whether we had better risk it or not. Hello! There is Steve on the brow of the hill yonder. He's our foreman you know. Hello there, Steve. Come on over here. I want to see you about something. He's coming.

ELSIE

I wish you hadn't called him.

FRECKLES

Eh, why not?

ELSIE

I would not meet him.

FRECKLES

Not meet him, not meet Steve? Well, you are the first one that --- why don't you know Steve? He's the best man at Arrow Ranch.

ELSIE

Yes I--I am sure he is.

FRECKLES

Don't want to meet Steve---well I'll be blown!

STEVE

(ENTERS L.) What is it, Freckles?

FRECKLES

We want your advice about the storm. Miss, this here is our foreman, Mr. Steve Morton.

STEVE

How do you do, Miss Randolph.

FRECKLES

Oh you know each other---ooh!

STEVE

(PAUSE) I am glad we have met, Miss Randolph. I was afraid I should not have a chance to say good bye.

ELSIE

Good bye?

STEVE

Yes. I am leaving Arrow Ranch tomorrow.

FRECKLES

The hell you are! Beg your pardon---I forgot--but, Steve knocked me stiff. You don't mean that, Steve? Not---not for good--not for--ever?

STEVE

Yes -I am sorry, but--

FRECKLES

Well, I'll be da--

ELSIE

Mr. Freckles, perhaps you may be able to persuade Mr. Morton to remain--if you tell him that I---have made all arrangements to return to Boston at once. (EXITS C.)

FRECKLES

Here, Miss. Wait, I'll go with you.

ELSIE

(OFF C.) Please don't bother.

FRECKLES

Hmmm! I guess she don't want me to go---all right, Miss, but hurry or the storm will beat you. Hmmm! something here I don't get on to, Steve. You're in trouble---yes yer be---aint nothing I can do?

STEVE
Nothing, Freckles -but thank you.

FRECKLES
We've been pals, Steve--and, you know what that means out here when a man is in trouble--it is his bunkie that he should ask help from.

STEVE
Yes. I know and I know you would go the limit.

FRECKLES
And a mile and a half farther than that.

STEVE
But there is nothing you can do--nothing!

FRECKLES
Sure, Steve?

STEVE
Positively sure, Freckles. Fate has closed all doors to help.

FRECKLES
Out here in Arizona, we never admit that Fate has licked us till she's got us down and roped, Steve.

STEVE
I'm down and roped, Freckles.

FRECKLES
It is something about that gal--Miss Randolph---you didn't meet her today--for the first time--- you knowed her in your old life somewhere.

STEVE
Yes, I knew her---before--in that old life.

FRECKLES
Well, I'll be---and, you were friends?

STEVE
Great friends, old pal---we were going to be married.

FRECKLES
Well, may I be kicked ter death by a yearling heiffer---so that's what she was crying for on the front step last night suffering catamounts. I've got it! She was crying for you.

STEVE
No, no!

FRECKLES
Yes she was. Steve, that gal loves you---yes she does!-- I aint no Don Juan, but I reckon I can see through a corral fence as well as any one---she's found out you're married and is the--

STEVE
Yes, Freckles, Miss Randolph does love me---I love her---have always loved her---and always will love her.

FRECKLES
Then everything is all right, isn't it? You love her---she loves you-- see, that's a royal flush-- --the best hand in the deck--cash in your cards, and marry the girl.

STEVE

You forget---I have a wife.

FRECKLES

Hmmm! That is an objection, aint it? I wish the parson was here. I'd ask him to make a few remarks appropriate for the occasion.

STEVE

I married Piquita in Pique; I was mad I think--mad!

FRECKLES

The court agrees with you.

STEVE

But she is my wife. Elsie can be nothing but a memory. Thank God! I can at least have the memory of my lost happiness.

FRECKLES

Memory! that only brings pain, Steve.

STEVE

Yes, but it is tempered by sweetness---in spite of all.

~~FRECKLES~~ ELSIE

(ENTERS FOLLOWED BY MENDOZA) Save me! Save me!

MENDOZA

(ALARMED) Senorita--it was a mistake--I will explain--

STEVE

Do so and be quick then.

FRECKLES

I'll plug him, and then ask explanations afterwards.

STEVE

Tell, us, Elsie, what did this dog do?

MENDOZA

I was--

FRECKLES

Shut up! Let the lady speak!

ELSIE

This man tried to kiss me.

STEVE

You yellow cur, I'll choke the life out of you. (BUS.)

ELSIE

Please---please don't!

STEVE

Get out!

MENDOZA

(RISES INSTINCTIVELY PUTS HAND TO THROAT SAVAGELY) I'll pay you for this, Senor--

STEVE

Go I say before--

MENDOZA

You are two to one--so I go--but weshall meet alone, and--

STEVE

We needn't wait.

MENDOZA

There is a lady present.

STEVE

Outside she will not be there- I warned you not to be here after sunrise. I'll keep my word with you now. (BUS.)

ELSIE

No, no! Steve---please--for my sake---please Steve, in memory--

MENDOZA

(FEELING SAFE. BRACES UP. SNERS) The lady is very convenient. to plead for you--(BOWS MOCKINGLY) Adios Senorita--sneur, I shall wait your promised meeting. (BOWS AND EXITS C. AND R.)

FRECKLES

I'll bury that greaser free in my private lot, if you let me go after him now, Steve.

STEVE

(TO ELSIE) Do you wish to return to the ranch or stay here till the storm passes?

ELSIE

I think I would rather return to the ranch.

STEVE

Freckles, you go with Miss Randolph---I---I will look after your work. (EXIT)

FRECKLES

Poor old pal! Are you ready, Miss?

ELSIE

(BUS.) Perhaps I had better remain here---

FRECKLES

But---

ELSIE

Don't let me keep you from you work. (BUS.) I

I won't be afraid.

FRECKLES

Well, there is a lot of young cattle that oughter be brought up under the shelter of the hills, but I don't like to leave---

ELSIE

Leave me, and I can take care of them.

FRECKLES

Well, if you think you won't be frightened here, you take this---
(HANDS GUN)

ELSIE

Oh no no !

FRECKLES

Don't reckon you'll have ter shoot anybody---but you can use it as a sort of a signal--if you git scared or looney or anything---you just fire a shot and I'll come on the jump. I'll leave it here. (BUS. Don't forget a shot will bring me. (EXIT)

ELSIE

I'm sorry I did not go with him. (BUS.) If that awful man whould come back. (BUS.)

PIQUITA

Mendoza Mendoza---are you here? Who are you? (LAUGHS) Oh yes so---
(LAUGHS) It was a rendezvous, eh? I thought so!

elsie

What do you mean by rendezvous?

PIQUITA

You do not know ehM So---you are a lady, eh?--Let me look at you. ---in your eys. I suppose you think I am not worthy to tie your shoes, eh? Oh I know I am not one of your class but I do not make secret meetings with married men.

ELSIE

If you mean I am here to meet Mr. Morton, you are mistaken.

PIQUITA

Oh am I? Perhaps you think also that I am a fool---that I have not eyes to see. You are not here to meet my husband then why are you here?

ELSIE

I came out for a walk and---

PIQUITA

A walk---on a night like this? Pah! don't take the trouble to lie. I know you came here to meet this man--

ELSIE

It's your own guilty mind that causes you to see treachery in others.

PIQUITA

What do you mean---my guilty mind?

ELSIE

That you're here to meet another man.

PIQUITA

You lie!

ELSIE

When you entered here, you called out a man's name---Mendoza.

PIQUITA

And if I did, I know what I am doing.

ELSIE

I have no doubt of that but does your husband know? Is he aware that his wife meets her Mexican friend---at night?

PIQUITA

No--he does not know. If I thought you'd tell him--

ELSIE

Why shouldn't add to the unhappiness you have probably already brought him?

PIQUITA

He has told you that, eh? He has told you that he is unhappy with me?

ELSIE

Steve Morton has told me nothing--he is not the kind of a man who would complain to another. But you could not understand. You are his wife---rest assured he will never forget your claim upon him.

PIQUITA

No ---I shall take good care he does not forget my claims.

ELSIE

Please go away---I do not wish to talk to you.

PIQUITA

But I wish to talk to you.

ELSIE

Then I will go. (BUS.)*

PIQUITA

Take care!

ELSIE

Don't be afraid---I am merely going to signal one of the men.

PIQUITA

Oh that shot will not be heard a hundred feet away from here. No one will come for you, now. I want to know---

ELSIE

I will answer no questions.

PIQUITA

Then I will answer them for you--you love this man, you loved him before he came here. You came here for him---last night I heard

I heard enough to tell me that--but you shall not have him. Do you hear that? You white faced thing, you shall not have him. He is mine--mine---and I shall keep him.

ELSIE

I did not come here for him, but I will tell you this, I do love him though he can never be anything to me--in my heart---I pray for his happiness--pray that God will protect him from such a creature as you are. (EXIT)

PIQUITA

Ah--damn gringo--I--

ELSIE) MENDOZA

(ENTER QUICKLY C.) Ah, my Piquita, you have come--(STARTS TO EMBRACE HER)

PIQUITA

What do you want? You send Pedro with a message--do you think that I will come at your bidding like a dog? It is the last time I shall meet you.

MENDOZA

Oh I think not--(SMILES)

PIQUITA

I swear it by the Virgin---I see you no more.

MENDOZA

Ah--and I swear also that I will go to your husband--this cowman--

PIQUITA

No--you have not the courage--pah! he would whip you--as easily as the storm shakes the trees outside?

MENDOZA

But if I tell him the truth? You ask why I send for you--- (POINTEDLY) because you are going away with me--Juarez.

PIQUITA

No--yesterday--perhaps--but since I have learned something I will not go and leave him to this girl--she loves him --but I am here. always between them--you go---I no longer love you.

MENDOZA

(ANGRILY) No matter--you go with me-(STARTS FOR PIQUITA)

PIQUITA

Keep back--I warn you--

MENDOZA

(LAUGHS. STARTS FOR HER SAVAGELY) Pah! I'll have you if I have to go to hell for you. (JUMPS AT HER. SHE FIRES SHOT AND HE FALLS)

PIQUITA

(LAUGHS) You will go to hell---without me. (EXITS C.)

MENDOZA

(RAISES ON ELBOW MOANS HOARSELY) You devil--you devil--(PAPER FROM BREAST* if I could call for some one to take this to Morton (TRIES TO RISE FALLS BACK. MOANS) too late--but they will find it

I will speak even from the grave. (DIES)

ELSIE

(IN DOOR) He is gone--the storm is over--I will fire again for Mr. Freckles. (BUS.) My God--what is that? (MOANING) He's dead!

STEVE

(ENTER BUS.) My God! she's killed him.

FRECKLES

(ENTERS) Here I am--on hand--just as I said--did the wind blow the lantern out. (BUS) Hello it's the Mex; he's dead.

STEVE

(TO ELSE) Shh--trust me.

FRECKLES

Who---who--did you---you, Steve?---you???

STEVE

Yes, Freckles, I killed him!

(CURTAIN)

ACT THREE

ELSIE

(DISCOVERED AT RISE WITH FRECKLES WHO HAS A GUN)
What are you going to do with that gun?

FRECKLES

Oh it was a little out of order. I thought I might as well fix---
it----aint got nothin' else to do just now.

ELSIE

Mr. Freckles, you are not telling the truth.

FRECKLES

Honest, injun, I--

ELSIE

You are getting that gun ready, you are going to fight.

FRECKLES

Well perhaps you are right, Miss.

ELSIE

Who?

FRECKLES

Greasers. Wago said there were over two hundred down by the border
and headed this way. Do you think I'd let them take a friend of
mine? Well, not so's you could see it--if they can find but there's
only a few of us---zowie!--they'll be down on us like a ton of brick
---so it is up to us to pretend we've got a small army.

RECORDED ELSIE

Steve has sent for the sheriff.

FRECKLES

Yep--but they are liable to git here first at that.

ELSIE

Do you think they will harm, Steve?

FRECKLES STEVE

(ENTERS) Not a bit.

FRECKLES

Won't, eh? You don't know them boys.

STEVE

Well, I wonder when the sheriff will be here to take me to Douglas.

FRECKLES

To Douglas? Steve, you aint going ter give yerself up? You don't
mean that you're going ter let them jail yer jest for killing a
greaser.

STEVE

The lasw is just as strong against killing a greaser as a white
man. If they didn't do that, there would be nothing to prevent men
from killing a greaser everytime they are in sight. (exit)

FRECKLES

FRECKLES

Well, the law may think a lot of a greaser's life, but if I was president, I'd offer a bounty to every cow puncher that killed one, and send him out to get another.

ELSIE

Do you think the sheriff will put Steve in prison?

FRECKLES

I suppose he will. That is what sheriff's are for you know. And if Steve gives himself up---

ELSIE

But he musn't do that--he mustn't--he must escape, won't you please see him, and--

FRECKLES

Well I'll try but I don't know--he's stubborn---Steve is/(EXIT)

..d.ELSIE.

He, must, try, and, escape, d.

..d,d,d,d,d.FRECKLES.

(ENTERS), and, d

ELSIE

There is something about this that I do not understand. If Steve is really guilty--why don't he try to escape? You saw him? You asked him to try and escape.

FRECKLES

Umm! No.

ELSIE

What did he say?

FRECKLES

His language won't bear repeatin'---befroe a lady I'm through if you want to hear some real good solid American language--why you just ask him what I did. (EXIT)

STEVE

(ENTERS)

ELSIE

Steve! Steve! Please, I must speak to you.

STEVE

I came here to warn you.

ELSIE

To warn me?

STEVE

When the sheriff comes here---you must let the blame and evidence point all to me.

ELSIE

I don't understand what you mean. You don't mean you want me to testify against you?

STEVE

That's what I want you to do--testify against me.

ELSIE

You should know me better, Steve---nothing could compell me to say one word to injure you.

STEVE

It is not me that I am afraid of ---but it is you.

ELSIE

If Why what have I to fear?

STEVE

In saying anything wrong that is where your danger li(EXIT)

ELSIE

My danger? What can he mean? (GOES TO HOUSE) Poor Steve---let them question me if they will---I will die before I say one word against you. (EXIT IN HOUSE)

FRECKLES

Steve---Steve you've got time--the possee are in sight you've got time yet to skeedaddle---

STEVE

(ENTERS) No I shall give myself up.

FRECKLES

Steve, why are you doing this? You must have a powerful reason. I ask you what is, but if you tell the sheriff you killed that greaser you're a liar.

STEVE

What!

JFRECKLES

Why do you say that?

STEVE FRECKLES

Old pal you never killed that Mex.

JFRECKLES STEVE

Why do you say that?

STEVE FRECKLES

Cause I know the greaser was killed by a forty four--the gun you pack is a thirty eight, point number one--then again--the greaser never carried a gun, you can't tell me what you shot a man without giving him a chance.

JFRECKLES STEVE

I---I my anger blinded me.

STEVE FRECKLES

No, Steve--it won't do, Steve, you are doing this for some one else--I know Steve--it is for that girl.

STEVE

God!

FRECKLES

FRECKLES

I lent her my gun last night--I seen a black spot on her finger where the powder backed fire---that old gun always does that--Steve I left her in the hut alone---the greaser came, and--Steve--that gal did it. (STARTS FOR DOOR)

STEVE

Where are you going?

FRECKLES

To meet the sheriff of course. (STARTS TO GO L.)

STEVE

Wait!

FRECKLES

No I'm going to tell the truth.

STEVE

If you try to pass that gate, I'll drop you.

FRECKLES

No use, Steve--I won't stand to see you sacrifice yourself.

STEVE

You've got to stand for it. Freckles, we have been pals for years Do you want to end our friendship now? I love that girl--

FRECKLES

I know--but is that love worth losing your liberty---perhaps your life for?

STEVE

Yes, you were right Freckles. She did it. I don't know why but she must have had some good reason---this is her life or mine-- old pal and she--must not suffer my life is useless to me--here is al joy and brightness--someone must satisfy the law--I ask you to let me be the man.

FRECKLES

No, I--you must not, I--

STEVE

You must be silent--for my sake--in the name of our friendship.

FRECKLES

I--I can--do it--well, well, I for your sake, Steve.

STEVE

Thanks, old pal.

FRECKLES

It goes agin' me but I'll do it. Steve, do you remember when my broncho kitty broke her leg. Well I loved that horse but I looked her in the eyes and put a bullet in her head that's just now I feel today--you're like a brother to me, Steve, but I'm going ter let you go--to your death perhaps--Oh hell! (EXITS)

PIQUITA

(ENTER R. U. E.) Steve--what do I hear. Are you crazy?

STEVE

What have you heard?

PIQUITA

That you are going to give yourself up to the sheriff--it is madness---why do you do this?

STEVE

To save a woman.

PIQUITA

Merciful saints--he knows!

STEVE

Piquita, you have made my life a hell on earth for four years, but there must be some good in you. If you will help me save her--

PIQUITA

Her?

STEVE

Yes, Miss Randolph.

PIQUITA

So you think she did it, eh?

STEVE

Never mind now what I think--the sheriff is coming, promise to give your evidence against me, tell of my jealousy of this Mex--- his quareels with, tell of the warning I gave him---do this and I will make my property over to you.

PIQUITA

Do you think you can bribe me?

STEVE

Don't take that stand! What did you ever want with me except my money? Do as I ask or you'll never get a dollar of my money.

PIQUITA

(LAUGHS) Very well--it shall be as you say---getgo to prison if you like. I'll help to send you there, you fool. Go and suffer for your white faced love---that's all you deserve.

FRECKLES

(ENTERS) He's coming, Steve. If you want to get now is your last chance. I'll hold the gang back for a few minutes. Hold on, sheriff, you can't come in.

STEVE

Stop, Freckles. Come in, Sheriff.

HI HAWKINS

(ENTERS FOLLOWING FRECKLES) Howdy, Steve. (TO FRECKLES) You mean well, Freckles, but you allus was a dern fool.

FRECKLES

Well, maybe I am but I'd rather be a damn fool than a dead sheriff and that's what you'd have been if Steve hadn't called.

HI HAWKINS

(TO STEVE) My boys are holding the greasers back, but I've promised to see justice done. Darned sorry, Steve, but I've got ter arrest ye for the murder of that Mex.

STEVE

All right, Sheriff, I am ready.

ELSIE

I don't believe he is guilty.

HI HAWKINS

Well, a little investigating may settle that question. Who else was there? (LOOKS AT FRECKLES) Was you there?

FRECKLES

Where? Where?

HI HAWKINS

Where the Mex's body was found.

FRECKLES

Yes, I was there.

HI HAWKINS

Ummm--and what did ye hear?

FRECKLES

Where?

HI HAWKINS

At the place where the body was found.

FRECKLES

Nothing in there, but outside--

HI HAWKINS

Oh ye heard something outside---well, what was it? --Never mind trying to think of it all, what word or words made the most impression on you?

FRECKLES

Well, me and the gange heard the shot and we started for the shaft. Me and Howling George in the lead---well just before we got to the door---we sorta bumped inter each other, and--

HI HAWKINS

(IMPATIENTLY) Well, well, and what you heard---

FRECKLES

Oh yes--the words that made the most impression on me--oh yes---Howling George said then--he said, "Get to hell off my foot!"

HI HAWKINS

(DISGUSTED) Humm I was a fool ter try and get any information

OUTER YE** ALL COWBOYS ARE NATURAL BORN LIARS. (TO ELSIE) What's yer name?

ELSIE

Elsie Randolph.

HI HAWKINS

I understand ye were the fust ter see them together---Steve that and that Mex, and you never saw the Mex afore that time.

ELSIE

That is wrong. I saw him before I was in the shelter. When the storm came up--Mr. Freckles was with me, but he had to leave me to attend to his cattle--he didn't want to leave me alone and insisted that I should take his revolver---I was alone, perhaps five minutes I was standing with the revolver in my hand, when suddenly a man entered the house.

HI HAWKINS

Um---yes---who was the man?

ELSIE

The Mexican.

HI HAWKINS

(NODS) I see--go on.

ELSIE

So you see I have a diamond of some value on my finger. This man tried to take it from me.

STEVE

What?

ELSIE

He grabbed my arm---I was frightened---I raised the revolver---there was an explosion and he fell down in front of me--and that was all I think.

HI HAWKINS

(SLOWLY) Ummm--if this man tried ter rob you and you shot in self defense, I don't see that there's much ter kick about. I'll tell that bunch of greasers out there the truth and that'll just about end it I guess. (STARTS TO GO UP C.)

PIQUITA

(ENTERS) Wiat, Senor Sheriff--you cannot tell the truth to Mendoza friends---the greasers, as you call them, until you know the truth. That woman's story is a lie. Mendoza was a rich man---he had no need to rob her. He was a relative of mine---and I sent him to meet her--

HI HAWKINS

What for?

PIQUITA

Tobeg her to go away and leave my husband to me. She love him---she loved him long ago---and she come out there to take him back to the east with her---Mendoza he plead with her, but she laugh

AT HIM. Then he threatened to tell al l that she had been, and the she shot him, she killed him!

STEVE

You snake!

PIQUITA

Well, then what do you expect---the snake always strikes!

FRECKLES

No wonder Steve was willing to go to jail.

STEVE

Sheriff, it is time we got to facts. Neither story is true. I told that Mex to stay away from my wife and the ranch. I found him in the shack and forced Freckles to lend me his gun---

FRECKLES

What!

STEVE

I was overcome with anger and I shot and killed the Mex.

ELSIE

No, no that is not true.

STEVE

It is true, Sherriff, she's only trying to stand up for me because she thinks she done me wrong once before in the old life, but if I allowed her to sacrifice herself, I'd be lower than that Mex I killed. Yes, Sheriff, I shot and killed the Mex--and I am your prisoner.

HI HAWKINS

All right, Steve. Yer story sounds the most likely to me. I'll have ter ask yer to come along with me.

ELSIE

Wa&tk Sheriff, you are making a terrible mistake. I am beginning to think that I also have made one.

HI HAWKINS

(DRYLY) Ye made a derved big one when ye accused yerself of murder. (SLOWLY) Ummm! Durned if I don't think I'd oughter to be on the safe side and arrest ye both.

STEVE

Hold on, Sheriff---you are the best poker player in Arizona and you don't want to be fooled by a bluff. I'll show you that Miss Randolph's story is not true. You say you killed that Mex---how?

ELSIE

I---I shot him.

STEVE

Sheriff, lend me your gun. Don't be afraid.

HI HAWKINS

(TAKES SMALL REVOLVER FROM POCKET) All right, I'll lend your

Powerful Willie, but--(COVERS STEVE WITH LARGE REVOLVER) Sweet Marie has got her eyes on you.

STEVE
(HANDS GUN TO ELSIE) Take this gun and show us how you did it.

ELSIE
I raised the gun. As he grabbed me---I---I fired.

STEVE
How far away was he?

ELSIE
Quite near---I shrank from him a little before I fired.

STEVE
Was he as far away as that house?

ELSIE
Yes, I--think so.

STEVE
You had never had a revolver in you hand before until last night-- If you hit that door, I'll let you take my place.

HI HAWKINS
Hit that door! Why there aint no critter on earth that could miss it.

STEVE
Yet--if she hits, I'll call her story true.

HI HAWKINS
(AS ELSIE HESITATES) Go along, Miss---fire---fif He hit that door--

ELSIE
I will hit it. (BUS. (FIRES))

STEVE
Did she hit it?

FRECKLES
As far as I can see no blood was drawn.

HI HAWKINS
(SURPRISED) She didn't miss that door?

FRECKLES
Miss the door? Durn me, she missed the house!

HI HAWKINS
(LOOKS AT ELSIE REPROACHFULLY) Miss, I've got a great deal of respect for your sex, but I'm afraid you've been handling the truth rather careless like, and I know you're a damn bad shot. Come on, Steve.

PIQUITA
What about me? I must have money to live on.

KKKKKKK STEVE
When we get to Douglas I will have the sheriff make arrangements

for you to draw from the bank.

PIQUITA

Arrange it so that I can draw in Juarez---I go back to my own Mexico.

HI HAWKINS

Come along, Steve---we've got ter reach Douglas fore sunset.

FRECKLES

Hold on---new developments in the case.

HI HAWKINS

(DRILY) Ye aint goin' ter confess that ye killed this fealer too, be ye?

FRECKLES

No, but I'm going to ter tell ye who did.

HI HAWKINS

Then it wasn't Steve?

STEVE

1000-

~~KEEKKHAW~~ FRECKLES

Steve---n thing---he don't know no more about it then you do, Sheriff. Ask her if she could hit that door.

HI HAWKINS

Eh? What?

FRECKLES

I'll bet ten to one that she wouldn't miss it no more than she did the Mex in the shack last night.

PIQUITA

(LAUGHS) I? I kill Mendoza? Why should I? What reason had I to kill my friend, eh? Tell me that?

FRECKLES

I will--I think you killed him because you were afraid that he might tell Steve that he was your husband.

PIQUITA

What my husband? Senor Freckles is very funny.

FRECKLES

Not half as funny as this is. (PRODUCES PAPER)

HI HAWKINS

(LOOKS AT HIM INQUIRINGLY) What might that be, Freckles?

FRECKLES

Marriage Certificate.

HI HAWKINS

(TAKES PAPER AND LOOKS) This is written in Spanish. I can't---

FRECKLES

Sure--but here is the translation. I sent Wago to the San Juan Mission last night and the priest fixed it up for him.

STEVE

Where did you get that, Freckles?

FRECKLES

It was in the greaser's hand---I thought it might help out so I annexed it. Read her out sheriff.

HI HAWKINS

(READS)"This is to certify that the document handed to me by the Indian Courier Owago, is the certificate of marriage between Pedro Mendoza and Pepeta Alaverado, signed by me six years ago, Signed Padre Angelo.

STEVE

Six years ago? Then you are not my wife.

PIQUITA

(LAUGHS) No-you gringo fool--pah! if you were not a fool, you might have known that a long time ago. I am sorry you know--I should like to have made you pay---you and that woman--oh well, maybe the saints say otherwise---I will go---adios!

HI HAWKINS

(PUTS HAND ON HER SHOULDER) Never mind them "Adioses"---you're going along with me.

PIQUITA

You mean, Senor Sheriff, that you are going to arrest me.

HI HAWKINS

(NODS) That's it---for the murder of Mendoza.

PIQUITA

You may arrest me, Senor Sheriff, but you will not find it so easy to prove me guilty.

HI HAWKINS

I'll have to take a chance on that. Come on to jail with me.

PIQUITA

With you, Senor? Oh then you go to jail with me? Oh that is charming! (LAUGHS. EXIT C.)

HI HAWKINS

(AS HE EXITS) So long folks---see you all later. (EXITS L. U.)

FRECKLES

Congratulations, Steve---you are very happily unmarried.

steve

Thank God!

FRECKLES

When shall I tell the bunch the ceremony's coming off?

STEVE

Ceremony?

FRECKLES

Why the hitchin' aint nothing to hinder now, is there? And ye know the Missis won't have none as foreman of Arrow Ranch except a married man.

STEVE

Ebbie dear---what do you say?

ELSIE

What I wanted to say long ago----Steve---yes!

STEVE

(EMBRACES HER) Freckles, old pal, I'm the happiest man in the world!

FRECKLES

Say the happiest man under Arizona Skies, and you've said it all Steve.

FINALE